fore, we have no complaint or criticism from the Central trade union organisations. I have read quite a number of articles where certain reservations have been expressed at the State level or at the unit level. According to me, Sir, this is a very good scheme which will go a long way in helping the workers and strengthening our social security measures. However, in the morning, I was informed by the Secretariat of the Rajya Sabha, and I have also had a meeting wth the Hon. Chairman. Hon. Chairman informed me that many members have some reservations about this. So, I have proposed to the Chairman that I am willing to defer the discussion on the Bill for two days or three days or whatever it may be, and in the meantime I would request the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to convene a meeting of the leaders of all the political parties where I could go and explain what the scheme is. I am sure that once they get our explanation, every Member will accept this Bill because it is really a good one. But, I don't mind to postpone it. There is no difficulty about that at all.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Sir, the Hon. Minister has missed the mainpoint raised by Mr. Mathur, and that is, this Bill by itself, even if he explains it to us, does not contain the scheme...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : That is what the hon. Member raised.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I will present the scheme in the meeting.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Mr. Minister, now we have to take up the statement on the Telecom Tarriffs at 4 o'clock. So, this can be deferred for two days as suggested by you. And after having discussions with the leaders of the various political parties, then this can be decided.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL : The scheme should be circulated to every Member.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : That he will explain. Now, we will take up the statement by the Minister.

SHRI ASHIS SEN (West Bengal) : Sir, such an important Bill should be discussed with the trade unions and others. Materially, the trade unions and the workers are involved. Simply, by having a talk with a few leaders of Rajya Sabha, this cannot be solved because we have got plenty of objections.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : The Minister said that in the tripartite committee, central trade union leaders were represented. All these facts have been mentioned.

SHRI ASHIS SEN : In two days, it will not be possible to solve that. It means that we are only deferring today's discussion. It will not serve the purpose.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : That will be decided by the Chairman in consultation with the Minister.

Now, Shri Sukh Ram to make a statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER
Telecom Tariffs

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I take this opportunity to make the following statement :—

The Honourable Members are aware that the last revision of Telecom Tariffs took place on 1-4-90. This revision did not make any sizeable increase in the rates, but had introduced reduction in the rental for Measured Rate Exchange Systems below 100 lines from Rs. 750/- to Rs. 600/- p.a. and unit charge for calls beyond 5000 from Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 1.10. In addition, charges on calls made from Long Distance Public Telephones were reduced from full to 50% and further concessions in rentals for telephones of Recognised Educational Institutions and the Institutions working for the Handicapped were effected. The revision was, therefore, limited in its impact and it may

not be inappropriate to say that the real tariff revision took place five years ago only on 1-4-88.

Telecom is a capital intensive sector. While the cost of capital has been rising continuously, the cost of other inputs as also operations has also increased. In addition, as Honourable Members are aware, the Government has been following a liberal policy of extending the telecommunication services into rural areas on subsidized basis. Investment in telecom sector is, however, not drawing upon Government budgetary support.

The Telecommunication Department has made every effort to absorb the effect of rising costs by increasing productivity through better connectivity, accessibility and reliability. There has been considerable improvement in the network especially during the last three years. The number of stations with Subscriber Trunk Dialling facility increased from 892 on 1-4-90 to 4049 as on 31-3-93. The percentage share of Electronic Exchanges has also gone up from 5% in 89-90 to more than 50% at the end of 92-93, thus improving the reliability of services significantly.

In keeping with the commitment to faster development and better accessibility of the Telecom facilities, we have not only accelerated the expansion of telecom network but have also taken up the upgradation of the existing system for improving the quality of service. Against the average annual addition of 3.39 lakhs lines during the Seventh Plan, 9.87 lakhs new lines have been provided during 1992-93. The waiting list which stood at 8.3 lakhs at the commencement of the Seventh Plan has, however, increased to 22.90 lakhs as on 31-3-92 and to 28.46 lakhs as on 31-3-93. In the rural sector, 54750 Gram Panchayats are proposed to be provided with telephone facility during 93-94 supported by large subsidies.

It is in this context that the Telecom Tariffs were reviewed to consider whether these could be adjusted suitably, such that the burden on rural and weaker sections is kept to the minimum. Accordingly, I propose to make the following revisions in the existing tariffs.

Telephone Rentals : It is proposed to revise the rentals for Measured Rate Exchange Systems of 30,000 lines and above by about 10% even though a much bigger increase is justified on the basis of actual costs. However, in pursuance of the policy of provinding subsidized telephone services in rural areas, the telephone rentals for Exchanges in rural areas are not proposed to be revised.

Metered Telephone Call Charges : It is proposed to reduce the number of free calls from 150 to 120 per bi-monthly period in all exchange systems of 1000 lines and above, and to revise the call unit charge increasing it by about 13 to 27% in different slabs. The charges for calls made from Attended type STD Public Telephones will be revised from Re. 1 to Rs. 1.25 per unit, so that revision in call charges does not create serious anomalies in tariff structure.

Manual Trunk Call Charges : The trunk calls on account of manual assistance cost the Department more than the Subscriber Trunk Dialled (STD) calls. The tariffs for Manual Trunk Calls should not, therefore, be less than those for STD calls of the same duration. It is accordingly proposed to revise the rates for distances above 50 kms. The increase would be between 11% to 30%.

International Operator Assisted Call Charges : Consequent on the revision of tariffs for call units, a 50% increase in the tariffs for International Operator Assisted Calls is proposed.

Concessions to Rural Sector : With a view to popularising the use of telephone in the rural sector, it is proposed to not only continue the 50% concession on trunk calls from the Long Distance Public Telephones but to further reduce the charges for calls from a Long Distance Public Telephone to its Parent Exchange. The charges now proposed are a nominal 25p per call to a Flat Rate Exchange System

and 50p per call to a Measured Rate Exchange System. These charges will be irrespective of the distance at which the parent exchange is located.

No change in Telegram Rates : I am also glad to inform the House that it is not proposed to increase the charges for the Telegrams even though the telegram charges were last revised as far back as 1-3-83. This is in keeping with the fact that the service mainly assists the weaker sections. No increase is also proposed for the telegram charges applicable to the Press.

The above proposals *will be effective from* 1-5-93 and will result in a net additional revenue of Rs. 740 crores for the year 1993-94. Details of the proposals are given in the Annexure.

It is also proposed to revise the initial Registration Fee w.e.f. 28-4-93 for OYT and Non-OYT registrants in the Measured Rate Systems as follows :—

(a) *OYT Applicants*—
- —Less than 1,000 lines . . . . From Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 8,000
- —1,000 lines and above but below 10,000 lines . . . . . From Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 10,000
- —10,000 lines and above . . . From Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 15,000.

(b) *Non-OYT applicants*—
- —Up to 9,999 lines . . . . From Rs. 800 to Rs. 2,000
- —10,000 lines & above . . . From Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000

No change is proposed in respect of Flat Rate Exchanges which cater to the rural areas.

For information of Honourable Members, the amounts paid for registration were previously termed as "Registration Deposits" and earned interest which is now replaced by a waiting charge. With the increase in the Registration Fee as above, it is also proposed to allow applicants an additional waiting charge at the rate of 3% over and above the normal rate of waiting charge payable on the Registration Fee if the telephone connections are not provided within 6 months in the case of OYT and 2 years in the case of Non-OYT registrants. The enhanced fee as also the additional waiting charge will be applicable only to those applicants who register on or after 28-4-93. This will apply also to applicants of the Flat Rate Exchanges registered on or after 28-4-93 if the connections are not provided to them within the specified period.

I would like to assure the House that these revisions had become absolutely necessary, in the light of mounting costs and the fact that the Telecom Sector has to be self-sufficient. I would further like to assure the House that the Telecom Sector would continue its efforts for increasing connectivity, improving reliability and enlarging accessibility of services and for bringing the rural and remote areas into the mainstream.

The Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951, will be suitably amended to bring into force the above changes under the authority vested in the Central Government under Section 7 of the Indian Telegraphs Act, 1885. The relevant Notification in the official Gazette will be placed on the Table of the House in due course.

ANNEXURE

1. *Telephone Rentals* :

	Bi-Monthly	
	Existing Rs.	Proposed Rs.
—30,000 lines and above but below 1 lakh lines . .	250	275
—1 lakh lines and above but below 3 lakh lines . .	330	360
—3 lakh lines and above	330	380

II. *Metered Telephone Call Charges* :

— free calls per bi-monthly period ;

(a) No change in respect of Exchange Systems of Less than 1000 lines (i.e. 150).

(b) 120 in respect of exchange systems of 1000 lines and above.

— 121/151 (as the case may be)— 1000 calls from Rs. 0.80 to Re. 1 per unit.

— 1001-2000 calls from Rs. 1.10 to Rs. 1.25 per unit.

— Above 2000 calls from Rs. 1.10 to Rs. 1.40 per unit.

III. *Manual Trunk Call Charges* :

Existing		Proposed	
Radial Distance	Rate per 3 minute or part.	Radial Distance	Rate per 3 minute or part.
51— 100 . . .	Rs. 15	51 100 . .	Rs. 20
101— 200 . . .	Rs. 25	101— 200 . .	Rs. 30
201— 500 . . .	Rs. 45	201— 500 . .	Rs. 50
501—1000 . . .	Rs. 55	501— 800 .	Rs. 65
Above 1000 . .	Rs. 75	801—1200 . .	Rs. 85
		Above 1200 . .	Rs. 90

IV. *International Operator Assisted Calls*:

	Charges per minute*	
	Existing	Proposed
(a) SAARC Countries	Rs. 26	Rs. 39
(b) Other Neighbouring Countries . . .	Rs. 30	Rs. 45
(c) Countries in Africa, Europe, Gulf, Asia & Oceania	Rs. 50	Rs. 75
(d) American Continent & Rest of the World	Rs. 60	Rs. 90

*Minimum three minutes initially.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL (Bihar) : Sir, I am really distressed that this has become increasingly a habit of the Government that all the rates, all the prices are increased outside the budget. If you will kindly recall the way the steel prices were raised, the coal prices were raised, the way the sugar prices were raised —and now you have come to the latest and that is the raise in tariff on the telephone and telecommunications—these things increasingly go on pushing up the cost of living and at the same time, the Government plays tricks with us by telling, since inflation is going down, therefore, everything is going all right. Naturally, you will understand, if the railway fare goes up, if the price of coal goes up, if the telephone rates go up, it will affect the price structure of everything. You will find another price rise so far as people are concerned. That is one issue on which ore all in the country feel concerned. Why does the Government not have the decency, the honesty and the integrity to put this in the budget so that one knows the exact burden of the budget and people can comment on it.

We knew it from the very beginning what the IMF and the World Bank have been telling to the Government. They have been pressing that tariffs for these things should be increased. So, once again, performing to their command they have done it. Very soon we are going to witness the next phase. May be, during this session or after this session we will see the prices of other items going up. Very soon the tariff

for the electricity will go up. We will also see the prices of other items for which the IMF has been pressing will be going up. Ultimately, there is a limit up to which a common man can bear the burden.

The second point is and I can say it from my personal experience as I have been incharge of this Telephone Department, this Department has never been a losing Department. It has never been a deficit Department. It has always made profit. The only thing is, postal side has been weakening and, therefore, at one stage it was segregated. Now the more you increase, that does not mean that you are making yourself self-sufficient, you are making it more profitable. The prices of electronic items the world over are going down but here we are telling the people as if the cost is going up. The cost is not going up, it is going down. This increase in tariff rates we strongly protest against and I think we are voicing the view of the people that this is something not acceptable to the country.

श्री मुरली मनोहर जोशी (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह जो अभी वक्तव्य दिया गया है इसमें दूर संचार विभाग में, टेलीकम्यूनिकेशन सिस्टम में और विशेष कर टेलीफोन में टैरिफ बढ़ा दिया गया है। यह बहुत ही भर्त्सनीय कार्य है। बजट चल रहा है। आप उसमें यह ला सकते थे। बार-बार यह कहा जाता है कि बजट के अन्दर प्रावधान करके ही देश के सामने ऐसी चीजें रखी जानी चाहिए। सत्र चल रहा है। कमेटियां बनी हुई हैं। लेकिन आप अचानक आ जाते हैं और 740 करोड़ या साढ़े सात करोड़ रुपये अचानक ले लेना चाहते हैं। आप लूट करना चाहते हैं .... (व्यवधान)। यह मामला कमेटी के सामने जाना चाहिए था और वहां से पास होना चाहिए था। मैं यह जानता हूं कि आज सारी दुनिया में कम्यूनिकेशन सिस्टम को सस्ता करने की कोशिश चल रही है। लेकिन हिन्दुस्तान में दूसरी बात की जा रही है। आप ऐसा करके जनतंत्र के ऊपर भी आघात कर रहे हैं। कम्यूनिकेशन सिस्टम से, दूर संचार से, जितना आपस में विचारों का आदान-प्रदान होगा, जनतंत्र उतना ही मजबूत होगा। आप लोगों को बातचीत करने से वंचित करना चाहते हैं। दाम बढ़ा कर, कीमतें बढ़ा कर इस तरह से आप गलत काम कर रहे हैं। एडमिनिस्टर्ड प्राइसेज को निरन्तर बढ़ाते चले जा रहे हैं। एक के बाद एक चीज के दाम बढ़ाते जा रहे हैं। मैं इस बात से सहमत हूं कि आपने अपने फैसला करने की शक्ति को गिरवी रख दिया है। इट इज अन्डर इंटरनेशनल प्रेशर। आप इस तरह से भारत की आर्थिक आजादी को गुलामी की तरफ ले जा रहे हैं। यह प्रयास सहन नहीं किया जा सकता है। मैं समझता हूं कि आज भी अगर दूर संचार मंत्री की जनतंत्र के प्रति आस्था है, संसद के प्रति आस्था है, बजट प्रणाली के प्रति आस्था है तो इसको कमेटी के पास भेजें। इस पर विचार होना चाहिए, बहस होनी चाहिए और देश को पता होना चाहिए कि किस तरह से चोर दरवाजे से लोगों की स्वतंत्रता को हरण किया जा रहा है और इस प्रकार से अपने खजाने को मजबूत करने चाहते हैं। गुजराल साहब की इस बात से मैं सहमत हूं कि यह विभाग तो हमेशा प्रोफिटेबल रहा है, इसमें घाटा कहां है? वास्तव में यह एक सोशियल सर्विस भी है। इसके दो हिस्से हैं। इसका कामर्शियल भाग अलग है, लेकिन सामाजिक सेवा भी है। यह जनतंत्र का महत्वपूर्ण उपकरण भी है। आप इस तरह से खतरनाक रास्ते पर बढ़ रहे हैं। मैं यह समझता हूं कि इसका पूरी शक्ति के साथ हम विरोध करेंगे।

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (GOA): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, this was a shocking statement made by the hon. Communications Minister. We can understand if the Minister wants some funds to expand the telecome network, but, I don't think this is how the hon. Minister should mop up revenue.

With the expansion of telecom facilities and the development of the telecom industry, I feel, there is more and more pilferage in the Department. So, it is a very common sight that people make international

calls just for Rs. 100. A person in London can speak to a person in Paris not from those exchanges but from kidwai Bhavan in Connaught Place. So, if the Minister does not have a foolproof method of checking the pilferage of funds in his own Department, I don't think that people should be penalised. So, I would request the hon. Minister to see that there is a system established in the Department to see that the pilferage through calls, especially international calls, is checked. There should be vigilance committees. At the moment we lodge our complaints with the Department, but there is no one to take any action. I, being a Member of the Telephone Advisory Committee, lodged a complaint about the PCOs in Goa being misused by the Department people. The PCOs are alloted only to the Department people in *benami*, and it becomes very-very difficult for the Department to mop up revenue for the Department. This is the reason why the Department is running in loss.

Second, the hon. Minister has mentioned about the registration. He has increased the amount for the OYT registration. I think, the telephone facility should not be a luxury in this country, but it should be a necessity. So, I would request the hon. Minister to see that the registration is linked to the family income, the income of the family mentioned in the ration card. The low-income group people should be permitted to register as general applicants by paying Rs. 800, and they should also get a priority under the OYT scheme. A person who can pay more money shold not get priority over other people who cannot afford to do so. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to link the application for telephone to the family income as mentioned in the ration card. This is my request.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं, एक बात जानना चाहता हूं .....

(व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : There is a procedure... (*Interruptions*)

श्री रामदास अग्रवाल (राजस्थान) : स्टैंडिंग कमेटी किस लिये बनी हुई है .... **(व्यवधान)**.. यह क्या मजाक है... **(व्यवधान)**.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : The Minister will reply to that.

Shri Vithalrao Madhavrao Jadhav.... (*Interruptions*)

श्री रामदास अग्रवाल : जनता के साथ धोखा किया जा रहा है । कमेटी बनी हुई है... **(व्यवधान)** ...

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : क्या मंत्री महोदय यह आश्वासन दे रहे हैं कि जो कम्यूनिकेशन कमेटी बनी हुई है, बिना उसकी अनुमति के वे इसको नहीं करेंगे ? ... **(व्यवधान)**

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : I am not going to hear you... (*Interruptions*)...

Shri Vithalrao Madhavrao Jadhav... (*Interruptions*)...

you kindly take your seat... (*Interruptions*)

The Minister will reply. You kindly take your seat... (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Jadhav, you speak. ... (*Interruptions*)

The Minister will reply. You sit down. ... (*Interruptions*)

The Minister will reply.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Let the Minister reply first.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : No, no, no, that is not the procedure. The Minister, while replying, will answer this. ... (*Interruptions*) I will not change the procedure. I will not change the procedure. You take your seat.

Mr. Jadhav, you speak. ... (*Interruptions*)

No, I will not allow you. I will not allow you. ... (*Interruptions*)

The Minister will reply to it. ... (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Mathur, I will not call you if you disturb like this. ... (*Interruptions*)

You see the rules. Do you not want the Minister's reply?

Mr. Yadhav, you speak. ... (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Kindly take your seat. (*Interruptions*) The Minister while replying will meet all the points. Kindly take your seat.

श्री रामदास अग्रवाल : धोखा दिया जा रहा है (**व्यवधान**) टैक्स लगाया जा रहा है (**व्यवधान**)

श्री कैलाश नारायण सारंग (मध्य प्रदेश) : पार्लियामेंट चल रही है, यह क्या तमाशा है (**व्यवधान**)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : I am not going to permit you. Mr. Yadhav, you please speak. (*Interuptions*) The Minister is going to reply to all the points. You take your seat.

SHRI MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : On this limited question let him say.

इसका जवाब पहले दे दें ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Mr. Joshi, you are a senior Member. You know the procedure. you take your seat. (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Gautam, I will call you.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM : Sir, I am on a point of order.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : There is no point of order. Please take your seat. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV (MAHARASHTRA) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the point to note is how the communication netwoork has increased in the country. Sir, I am happy to note that the 54,000...

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL : Are you happy that the tax has been imposed? Please react on this. Are you happy on this taxation? Please say that. We know करोड़ों रुपयों की बेईमानी होती है । रोज डाके डाले जाते हैं डिपार्टमेंट के अन्दर । भ्रष्टाचार को तो आप रोके नहीं सकते हैं (**व्यवधान**)

श्री विठ्ठलराव माधवराव जाधव : सुनिये तो सही मैं क्या कह रहा हूं (**व्यवधान**)

श्री कैलाश नारायण सारंग : वाह, वाह । (**व्यवधान**)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Mr. Sarang, kindly take your seat. Let him say whatever he wants to say.

श्री कैलाश नारायण सारंग : कब तक खामोश रहेंगे हम (**व्यवधान**) आप हमें कब तक खामोश रखना चाहते हैं ?

श्री रामवास अग्रवाल : आज इन्होंने टैक्स लगा दिया है (**व्यवधान**) कल हमारे पेट्रोलियम मंत्री आएंगे और टैक्स बढ़ा देंगे कि हमारा इम्पोर्ट बिल बढ़ गया है, क्या मजाक बना रखा है (**व्यवधान**)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : The Minister will answer. You take your seat.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, 54,750 Gram Panchayats have been connected by the telephone system in this country.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL, (BIHAR) : Are you replying to the Statement by the Minister ? (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Mr. Jadhav, you have to seek clarifications. Put pointed questions to the Minister. (*Interruptions*) Mr. Shankar Dayal Singh, your name is there. You are going to seek clarifications. The Minister will reply to all the points raised by the hon. Members. May I ask Mr. Gujral and other hon. Members to raise the points? The Minister will reply to all the points.

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL : We have a serious objection to this. This is a tax imposition. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : We are having about seven lakh Gram Panchayats in the country. Out of those only 54,750 Gram Panchayats are proposed to be provided with the telephone facilities. I would like to know by when all the Panchayats of the country will be connected by the communication system. This is my first clarification. (*Interruptions*) I endorse the view expressed by Mr. Gujral and Joshi Ji that there is an increase in the charges from 10 per cent to 30 per cent. This increase will net an additional revenue of Rs. 740 crores. May I know from the hon. Minister at what deficit this telecommunication system of the country is running today? Do you have deficit in your budget? As on today there is a long waiting list and they are paying a large amount as telephone connection charges. The hon. Minister has increased these charges from 10 to 30 per cent. It is given in the annexure. In the case of charges per minute for SAARC countries he has increased it from Rs. 26 to 39. For other neighbouring countries, he has increased it from Rs. 30 to Rs. 45. In respect of countries in Africa, Europe, Gulf, Asia and Oceania, he has increased it from Rs. 50 to Rs. 75. For American continent and rest of the world, he has increased it from Rs. 60 to Rs. 90. In the case of domestic telecommunication system also he has effected a very-very steep increase. For the establishment of a new telephone line also, he has increased the telephone charges. The telecommunication system has been totally concentrated in the urban areas of the country. When we made this point last time he did not agree with us. But now, as he has said in his statement, he is going to bring 57,000 villages in the country under the telephone system. After two years or three years or at the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan, he can add more number of villages. The hike in telephone charges are not at all justified in the rural areas because the villagers are not in a position to pay this price.

Another thing is that if the Government is not in a position to manage the telecommunication system of this country, they can handover this system to the private sector by putting some restriction that they cannot increase tariff charges of the telephone without their approval. I have seen in the United States of America, Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, Telecommunication, everything is run by the private sector. They render very efficient service.

I am happy to note that the hon. Minister has increased the number of electronic systems. My village, my taluka is also connected with the electronic exchange but it never works. Whenever I telephone from my place, I get a reply that the electronic system is not working. If someone is seriously ill, he should be taken to a hospital in the urban areas. Before doing so, we have to telephone, the hospital authorities. If the telephone lines are not working, he will die on the way. May I know from the Minister what specific steps he is taking to make the telephone system more effective?

The second point is that, this rise in telephone tariffs is not at all justifiable. I want to know from the hon. Minister why his Department is running in loss. If there are some genuine problems, we can consider them. What are the factors which are responsible for the losses? The functioning of your telephone system is not at all a factor for the losses. But the employees who are working in the telephone system are responsible for these losses. They never respond properly. They don't behave properly with the customers also. These are some of the drawbacks which are there. I would have been happy if the hon. Minister had assured us that the working of the telephone system would be made more effective. Please tell us an instance when the whole telephone system in the country was working smoothly. This has never happened. Most of the time fifty per cent of the telephone lines are out of order. The working of the telephone system should be made more effective.

The third point is, if you have a very fantastic plan to implement, then, we can understand about the hike in telephone traiff. But I find nothing of that sort. There-

fore, it is not very desirable to raise the charges at this juncture. So I want clarifications to the points raised by me from the hon. Minister. What compelled him to increase the telephone charges in different parts of the country, both rural and urban areas ? Thank you.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM : The Minister should assure us whether he is going to entrust this matter to the Standing Committee. (*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : Mr. Gautam, if you interrupt like this, you will not get your chance to seek clarifications.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Let us not bring the question of our party here. I have pointed out the difficulties that will be faced by the pubilc. That is our aim.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) : You have already put your questions. Kindly take your seat.

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, दूरसंचार मंत्रालय की तरफ से जो वक्तव्य रखा गया है उससे मुझे लगता है कि न सिर्फ हमारी जनता को ही दूरसंचार से दूर किया जा रहा है बल्कि खुद दूरसंचार मंत्रालय भी इससे दूर होता जा रहा है । दूरसंचार मंत्रालय ने संचार की भूमिका को छोड़ कर बैंकिंग की भूमिका को अपना लिया है और अब यह नया रास्ता निकाला है कि अप्रत्यक्ष रूप में लोगों की जेबों से पैसा निकाल कर उनको 3 प्रतिशत इन्टरेस्ट के नाम पर रुपया आप जमा करें ।

मैं यह कहना चाहती हूं कि आखिर आपकी ऐसी कौनसी मजबूरियां थीं, जो आपने यह 740 करोड़ रुपये का उपहार हमारे देश की जनता को दिया है और जबकि इससे पहले ही आप बजट के जरिए बहुत बड़ा उपहार हमारी जनता को दे चुके हैं, बजट के पहले और बजट के बाद । यह आपकी कौनसी प्राथमिकता है ? जन-सेवा के नाम पर आप कौनसी जनसेवा करने जा रहे हैं ।

मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि आपके विभाग में जो धांधलियां चलती हैं, जो अनियमितताएं चलती हैं, उनको अगर आप रोक दें, तो भी आप पर्याप्त संसाधन जुटा सकते हैं, जिसके चलते आप जिस बात का दावा कर रहे हैं या दिखाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि हम दूर-संचार सेवाओं को ग्रामीण जनता तक पहुंचाना चाहते हैं । अगर आप अपने ही विभाग की अनियमितताओं को दूर करें, अपने ही विभाग में चल रही धांधलियों को दूर करें, तो शायद बहुत अधिक संख्या में आप अपने संसाधन जुटा सकेंगे ।

दूसरी बात मैं आपसे यह जानना चाहती हूं कि आखिर आपको यह 740 करोड़ का जो भार आपने हमारे देश की जनता पर डाला है, उस 740 करोड़ रुपये का इस्तेमाल आप किस तरह करेंगे, कितने प्रतिशत ग्रामीण जनता के लिए और कितने प्रतिशत शहरों के लिए और इसके साथ ही क्योंकि दूरसंचार सेवायें देश की जहां सामाजिक सेवा और वाणिज्यक सेवा से बहुत संबंध रखती हैं और महानगरों की तो एक तरह से जान ही संचार सेवा है । लेकिन क्या हमारे माननीय मंत्री अवगत हैं कि महानगरों में, खास करके मैं जिस महानगर से आती हूं, कलकत्ता, वहां की दूरसंचार सेवाओं के बारे में मैं आपसे क्या कहूं कि वहां शायद हर महीने-दो महीने में लोग टेलीफोन को श्रद्धांजली अर्पित करते हैं आप अगर कहीं भी टेलीफोन मिलाना चाहें, टेलीफोन मिलेगा नहीं ।

तो अगर महानगरों में आप टेलीफोन को विकलांग कर देते हैं, संचार सेवाओं को विकलांग कर देते हैं, तो महानगर की पूरी अर्थ नीति को आप विकलांग कर देते हैं । क्या आपने इस विषय की ओर कभी ध्यान दिया है कि आपकी दूरसंचार सेवाएं महानगरों में कितनी प्रभावशाली हैं, इस ओर कभी अपने ध्यान नहीं दिया ।

तीसरा सवाल जो मैं आपसे पूछना चाहती हूं, वह यह है कि आखिर ऐसी कौनसी जरूरत थी कि आप बजट के बाद यह

नया प्रस्ताव लेकर आए हैं । जब हमने एक नई व्यवस्था शुरू की है कि आप तमाम चीजों के जो सकरात्मक या नकरात्मक पक्ष हैं, उनको देख कर इस चीज की विवेचना कर सकें, तो क्यों नहीं आपने जरूरी समझा कि आपके विभाग की जो स्टैंडिंग कमेटी है, इसे उसके सुपुर्द कर दिया जाता कि वह कमेटी इस बात पर निर्णय लेती । (समय की घंटी) क्या जरूरत है, कौनसी आवश्यकता है, किस हद तक आवश्यकता है ? तो मैं समझती हूं जैसा कि दूसरे सदस्यों ने भी कहा है कि आप अपने इस प्रस्ताव को कम से कम अभी वापस ले लीजिए । हमारे देश की जनता पर पहले से ही इतने करों का बोझ पड़ा हुआ है । यह फिर अप्रत्यक्ष रूप में आप करों का इतना बड़ा बोझ हमारे देश की जनता पर मत डालिए और कम से कम गरीब जनता की सेवा के बहाने के नाम पर यह इतना बड़ा बोझ हमारे देश की जनता पर मत डालिए ।

आई. एम. एफ. के आर्थिक निर्देश आपके पास आते रहे हैं, क्योंकि आई. एम. एफ. लगातार आपको निर्देश दे रहा है कि जितनी जन-सेवाएं हैं, उन पर आप लगातार टैरीफ बढ़ाते जाइए, कीमत बढ़ाते जाइए, उनको महंगा बनाते जाइए ।

इसलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह निवेदन करना चाहूंगी कि कृपया बताइए कि कौनसी ऐसी आपातकालीन जरूरत आ पड़ी थी कि आपको इतने संसाधन जुटाने की जरूरत पड़ी और वह भी इस तरह चौतरफा दरों को बढ़ा कर । तो कृपया मंत्री महोदय हमें परिचित करवाएं कि अगर हमारे देश की जनता के प्रति आपकी सदइच्छा है, आपकी शुभ-आकांक्षा है, तो कम से कम हमारे देश की जनता को यह 'उपहार' मत दीजिए ।

श्री कैलाश नारायण सारंग : उपहार नहीं, प्रहार ।

SHRI VITHAL M. PATEL : (Gujarat) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, let me ask the Minister not to depend on his officers but to use his own brain. Do not take people for granted. Do not take telephone-users for granted. Improve your department. Without improving the efficiency of your department, you have no business to come to this House. Even the complaints of M.Ps. are not being attended to. They do not reply even to them. What will be the fate of the poor consumer ? You have no time to improve the efficiency of your department but you want to increase the charges. Here also, the language used is such as to fool people. How you come to Rs. 740 crores or Rs. 750 crores, what you income is, what your expenditure is and whether there is any possibility of a cut in expenditure of your department, you should work out all these things before coming to this House. When you are increasing so much, this is also underestimated. It may go even up to Rs. 1,000 crores. Before coming to this House, you must make it clear to the people "this is my income, this is my expenditure and I want this much money." But this way if you go to the people, it means that you are playing with the people. That will not be allowed. Suppose the private sector comes into this field, they will also ask for the same rate. They will charge the same rate or even more than that. This will benefit the private sector if they are coming into this field also. So, Mr. Minister, you must give us a complete account of your income and expenditure and why you want to increase the amount.

And, Sir, they are talking about the villages. I can give you the names of 200 villages of my State, Gujarat, which are giving more income than the cities. Villages are giving more income. I am prepared to give you the names of villages and you find out how much income they are giving. They are giving income ten times more than the expenditure. So, Mr. Minister, please clear everything and then come to this House; otherwise it will not give you a good name. You will get a bad name. For God's sake don't give a bad name to the Government. Instead, improved your bureaucracy and then come to this House. Thank you.

श्री इंद्र दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मान्यवर उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, 27 फरवरी को बजट पेश हुआ और कल 27 अप्रैल है, ठीक दो महीने में यह सरकार की बुद्धि भ्रष्ट हो गई या उस समय सरकार के लोग सो रहे थे जब बजट बना रहे थे और बजट पेश कर रहे थे, इसको बजट में नहीं लिया गया ? मान्यवर, उस समय देश की जनता को यह दिखाना चाहते थे कि हम जनता के लिए अच्छा काम कर रहे हैं । लेकिन जनता आपकी बारीकियों को खूब समझ रही है कि आप जनता के साथ कितना बड़ा विश्वासघात कर रहे हैं और टेलीफोन उपभोक्ताओं के साथ आप यह बहुत बड़ा दगा कर रहे हैं । माननीय डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी और श्री इन्द्र कुमार गुजराल ने जो भावनाएं व्यक्त की हैं, मैं उनसे पूर्णतः सहमत हूं । मान्यवर, मैं समझता था कि संचार मंत्री आज कोई ऐसा वक्तव्य देंगे जिसमें टेलीफोन सेवाओं में कोई सुधार होने वाला होगा, लेकिन संचार मंत्री जी का यह वक्तव्य सुन करके और पढ़ करके मुझे बड़ी निराशा हुई कि यह सरकार जो अंतिम सांस गिन रही है और अंतिम सांस गिनते समय भी इस देश की जनता के साथ विश्वासघात कर रही है । मैं चाहता था और आपके माध्यम से मांग करता हूं और स्पष्टीकरण चाहता हूं संचार मंत्री जी से कि आपके विभाग से जो फर्जी बिल जारी होते हैं पांच सौ रुपए अगर एक्च्युअल बिल हुआ तो उसका ढाई हजार, 50 हजार और एक लाख में अज बिल आता है, क्या आपने कभी इसके सुधार के बारे में कोई प्रयास किया ? संचार मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में कहा कि ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों की सेवाओं के लिए इन्होंने रिबेट दिया है । क्या संचार मंत्री जी को यह मालूम नहीं है कि सारी ग्रामीण टेलीफोन सेवाएं ठप्प पड़ी हैं ? केवल आपके कागज पर ये टेलीफोन सेवाएं हैं । गांवों की टेलीफोन सेवाएं कोई काम नहीं कर रही हैं । क्या आप इसके बारे में कभी विचार कर सकते हैं, कोई इसमें सुधार कर सकते हैं ?

मान्यवर, आप घंटी बजा रहे हैं इसलिए मैं सीधा प्रश्न कर रहा हूं और इस सदन के सभी माननीय सदस्यों की भावनाओं से अपने को सम्बद्ध करते हुए और कांग्रेस पार्टी के एक माननीय सदस्य की भावना से सम्बद्ध करते हुए, आपके माध्यम से मैं संचार मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करता हूं और यही मेरा प्रश्न भी है कि आपने जो यह टैरिफ इस सदन में प्रस्तुत किया है, वक्तव्य दिया है जनहित में, देश हित में और अपनी मरती हुई सरकार के हित में भी, इसको आप तत्काल वापस ले लें । यही मेरा अनुरोध है ।

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) : My first clarification is: What is the Government's thinking relating to telephone facilities, whether it is a necessity or a luxury or a Kamadhenu ? The second point is that the telephone tariffs are already high in our country as compared to the neighbouring countries. I would like to know whether the Minister can give the telephone tariffs in some of the neighbouring countries. The third point is that the Government is losing crores of rupees on illegal STD and ISD calls because of the connivance of the staff. I would like to know whether the Government has assessed the amount of loss in 1992-93 caused by these illegal STD and ISD calls. The fourth point is that the Government is going to get an additional income of Rs. 740 crores during 1993-94. With this additional income, what are the additional facilities that the Government is going to provide to the people ? How many additional STD centres is the Government going to give ? How many additional electronic exchanges is the Government going to give ? How many new connections is the Government going to give ? The fifth point is : What additional steps is the Government going to take to improve the efficiency of the Department ?

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, क्लेरीफिकेशंस में जितनी बातें पूछी जानी चाहिए, उसकी अब किसी तरह की जरूरत नहीं रह गयी है और वह इसलिए नहीं रह गयी है क्योंकि गुजराल साहब और जोशी जी ने शुरू में ही जो बातें इस संबंध में सरकार से जाननी चाही हैं और जो शिकायत दर्ज करायी है, उसका जवाब तो मंत्री महो-

वय को अंत में नहीं, शुरू में देना चाहिए मैं इस बात को इसलिए कह रहा हूं कि आपने शुल्क बढ़ाकर देश और जनता के साथ ही अन्याय नहीं किया है बल्कि आपने संसद की भी अवमानना की है और संविधान और लोकतंत्र की प्रक्रिया की आपने धज्जियां उड़ाकर रख दी है । इसी सदन में कुछ दिन पहले जब स्टैंडिंग कमेटीज के बारे में हम विचार कर रहे थे और यह विचार आया था कि जो भी स्टैंडिंग कमेटीज हैं उनमें बहस होगी और बहस के बाद जो उनकी मान्यता होगी, उनके अनुसार सरकार कार्यवाही करने के लिए किसी-न-किसी रूप में बाध्य होगी। अभी स्टैंडिंग कमेटीज की बैठकें चल रही हैं, लेकिन आपने सभी चीजों के शुल्क बढ़ा दिए, इसका मतलब क्या हुआ ? इसलिए मैं एक निवेदन करना चाहता हूं और सीधे आपसे पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या आप सदन को विश्वास में लेकर, लोकतंत्र की मर्यादाओं का पालन करते हुए, संविधान और सदन के लिए निर्धारित प्रक्रिया के अनुसार काम करते हुए आपने यह जो अभी शुल्क बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव रखा है क्या इसे आप अभी विड्ड्रा कर रहे हैं या आप इसे लागू करेंगे ? अगर आप विड्ड्रा नहीं करते हैं तो भले ही मैं अपने को इस सदन का छोटा-सा सदस्य मानूं, मैं सदन की कार्यवाही नहीं चलने दूंगा क्योंकि हम यहां यह अन्याय बर्दास्त करने के लिए नहीं आते हैं कि गरीब जनता को चूसा जाए। आप एक ओर तो 54 हजार करोड़ की बात करते हैं कि हम ग्राम-पंचायतों में यह पैसा लगा रहे हैं और दूसरी तरफ आप हर चीज में चाहे वह रेलवे हो या दूसरी हो, शुल्क बढ़ा देते हैं । कभी तो आप बजट के पहले बढ़ा देते हैं और कभी बजट के बाद बढ़ा देते हैं, कभी सदन के चलते बीच में बढ़ा देते हैं, आखिर इस माखौल का अर्थ क्या है ? इसलिए मैं अपनी ओर से सरकार से क्लैरीफिकेशन में यही जानना चाहता हूं कि इतनी बातें सुनने के बाद, जन-प्रतिनिधियों की भावनाओं को जानने के बाद और आप जानते हैं कि बाहर आपकी साख किस तरह से गिरती जा रही है, इस बात को समझते हुए भी आप इसे वापिस लेते हैं या मेरे जैसे लोग जोकि इन बातों को अच्छी तरह से समझते हैं, इसके टुकड़े-टुकड़े कर के हम इसे यहीं पर आपके सामने प्रस्तुत करते हैं ?

यही मेरा क्लैरीफिकेशन है ।

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

(I) The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 1992.

(II) The Cine-workers Welfare Cess (Amendment) Bill, 1993.

(III) The Copyright (Second Amendment) Bill, 1992.

SECRETARY GENERAL : Sir, I have to report to the House the following messages received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha :—

(1)

"I am directed to inform you that the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 1992, which was passed by Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 21st July, 1992, has been passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 19th April, 1993, with the following amendments :—

Enacting Formula

1. Page 1, line 1,—

for "Forty-third"

substitute "Forty-fourth"

Clause 1

2. Page 1, line 4,—

for "1992" *substitute* "1993"

I am, therefore, to return herewith the said Bill in accordance with the provisions of rule 121 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha with the request that the concurrence of Raya Sabha in the said amendments be communicated to Lok Sabha".